

Childhood Vaccination Not Tied to Allergic Diseases

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) Jun 16 - Routine childhood vaccinations are not associated with an increased risk of asthma or eczema, UK researchers report in the June issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

Dr. Tricia M. McKeever of the University of Nottingham and colleagues note that in the past few decades, there has been an unexplained increase in the prevalence of allergic diseases in the developed world.

To determine whether mass immunization might have any connection with this phenomenon, the researchers examined data on a birth cohort of 29,238 children who had been followed for up to 11 years.

Vaccines involved were those for diphtheria, polio, pertussis and tetanus (DPPT) and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

The researchers did find a certain association between overall population rates of MMR and DPPT vaccination and the incidence of asthma and eczema. However, this affected only "a minority of children who rarely seek care" from a general practitioner. This limited association, they say "is more likely to be the result of [ascertainment] bias than a biological effect."

Thus the investigators conclude that these and other findings indicate that "current vaccination practices do not have an adverse effect on the incidence of allergic diseases."